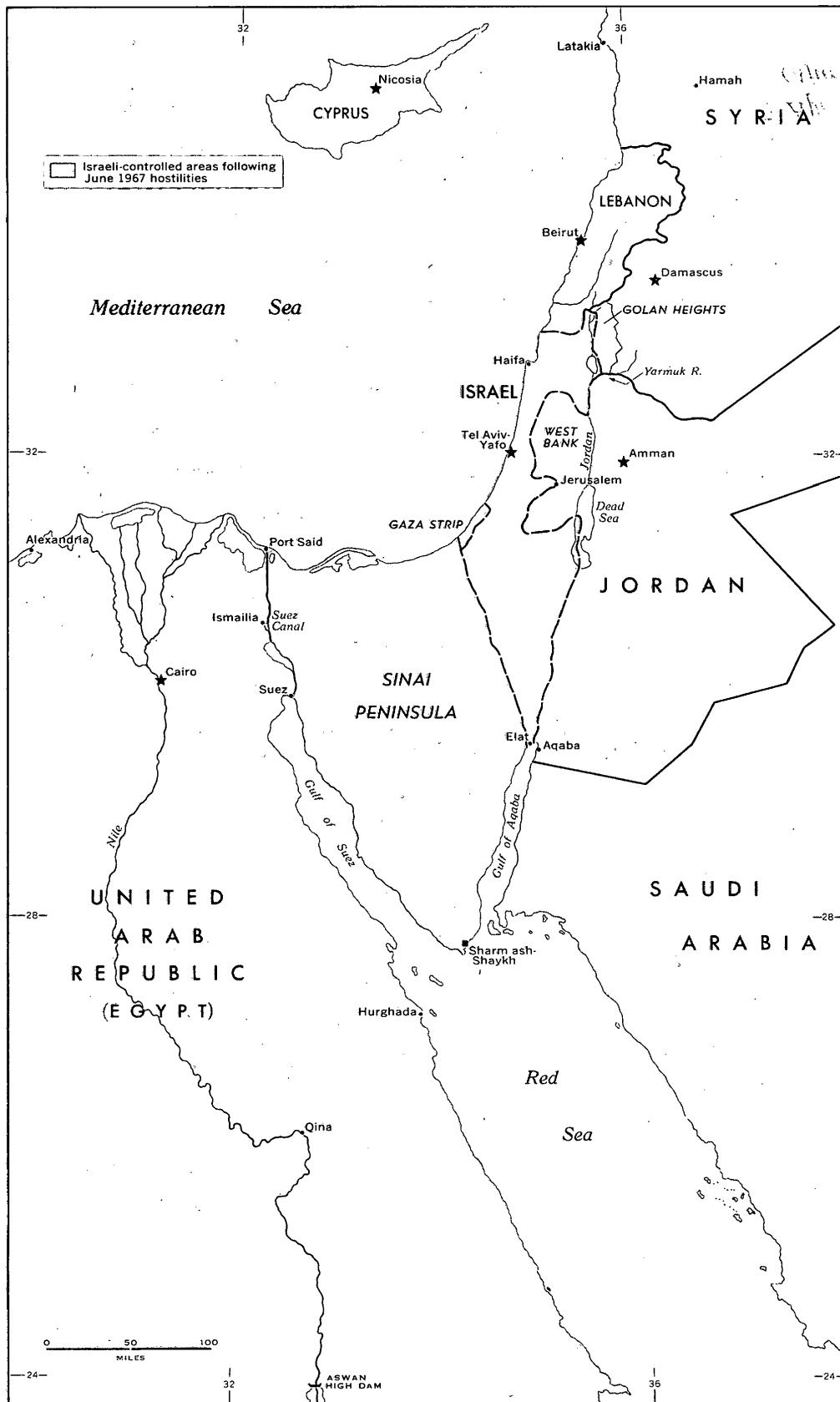


The President's Daily Brief

7 April 1969
(Afternoon)

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8 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
7 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Fighting erupted today between Jordan and Israel as King Husayn arrives in Washington for an official visit. Jordanian rockets crashed into Eilat, an Israeli port on the Gulf of Aqaba, in predawn hours, plunging it into darkness and sending people rushing to air raid shelters. As a reprisal, Israeli jets struck the port of Aqaba at dawn and silenced the rocket positions, according to Israeli military spokesmen. It was the first Arab attack on Eilat this year and the heaviest ever on the town.

Another series of fire fights also began across the Suez Canal early this morning and the fighting was apparently still in progress at mid-day local time. (Press, FBIS,

[REDACTED] 8 Apr)

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VIETNAM

Enemy-initiated incidents as of noon local time today remained generally low throughout all areas. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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There is nothing significant to report on any other area.

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I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Both Israel and Egypt seem to be getting ready for more fire fights across the Suez Canal.

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VIETNAM

Although Thieu's "Six Points"

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statement of 7 April in the main offered a restatement of Saigon's existing policy of "national reconciliation" in exchange for Communist military withdrawal, it also subscribed to the more distant goal of reunification based on free elections under a system of international inspection and guarantees. This "peace platform" is a useful follow-on to his announcement of 25 March that his government is ready for private talks with the NLF, and it helps strengthen Saigon's public position that it is ready for serious negotiations.

Thieu's [] initiatives suggest that he is genuinely more confident that he can deal successfully

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with the Communists in Paris and subsequently in post-settlement political competition. This is also apparent in his "exultation, bordering on euphoria" in a conversation with Ambassador Green on 4 April.

EUROPE

The appeal issued by the Warsaw Pact countries at their recent meeting in Budapest for a European security conference has revitalized West European interest in detente, with the Belgians and the Italians taking the lead. Some NATO members believe Soviet problems with China may influence Moscow to make genuine compromises in Europe; others think it would be poor politics to appear unresponsive even though some of them are skeptical that the Russians are in earnest. Most of the NATO foreign ministers apparently want an exchange of views on the subject at this week's ministerial meetings.

On the Soviet side, Ambassador Dobrynin mentioned Moscow's interest in the European security conference idea to Under Secretary Richardson last week. While we think that the Soviets are interested in turning Western European attention away from Czechoslovakia and toward detente, we doubt that they plan to make specific proposals for a meeting any time soon.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

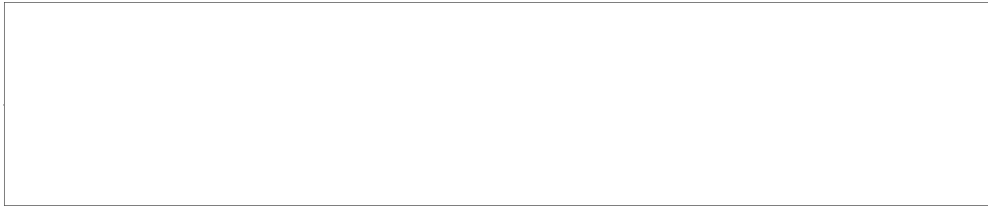
Further modifications are under way in the Moscow ABM system. Recent satellite photography shows a new wing being added to one of the two large radar buildings at each

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of the four active complexes.



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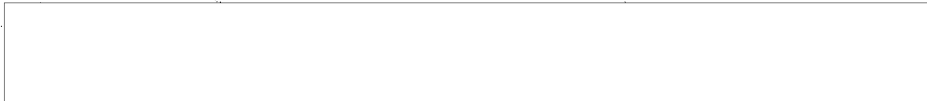


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In addition to the new construction, the photography shows a large number of missile cannisters at the ABM support facility near Moscow,

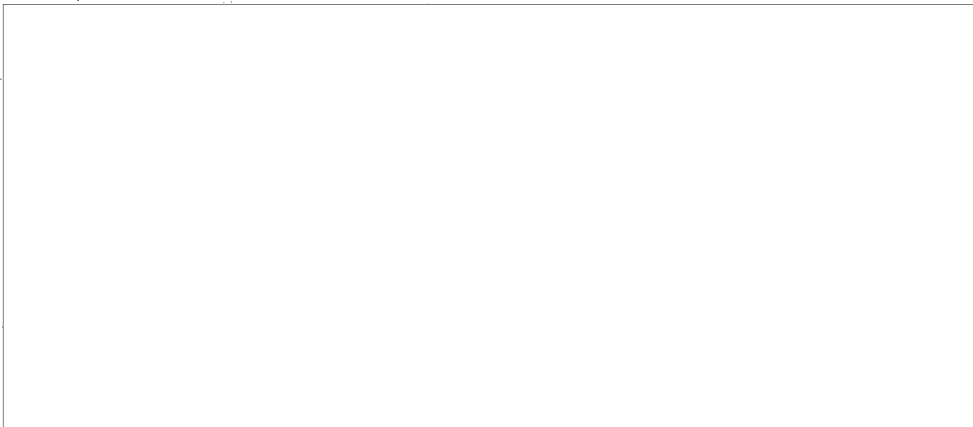


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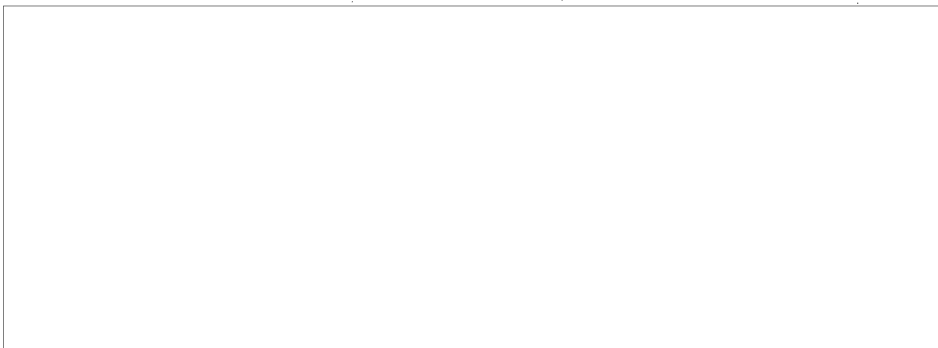


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The situation in Prague and vicinity remained calm over the weekend and today, which is a holiday. The city was inundated with the usual Easter visitors from Western Europe, especially West Germany. Contrary to Western radio reports, our embassy did not observe any increase in Czech military patrols; the military continue to be mixed with police in small patrols. Two student peace marches on Sunday were apparently cancelled; political leaders had been trying to talk the students out of their plans on Saturday.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

RUMANIA - COMMUNIST CHINA

The Rumanians are keeping firmly to their long-standing policy of neutrality in the Sino-Soviet dispute. The press has not mentioned the Sino-Soviet border problem since 4 March; last week it published a relatively warm message from the Rumanian party central committee addressed to the Chinese party congress and its chairman "Comrade Mao Tse-tung."

FINLAND

The Finnish Communist Party has been taken over by its liberal wing. At the Party congress which closed on Sunday the liberals, who had a majority of the delegates, were able to enact their version of the party program calling for a "peaceful transition to socialism" and a multiparty system.

A dispute over the selection of a new central committee precipitated a walkout by the conservatives; in their absence the liberals swept the more objectionable ones out of the leadership. The new 12-member politburo is weighted 9-3 in favor of the liberals. Party secretary Ville Pessi resigned after 25 years in office and was replaced by the relatively unknown Arvo Aalto.

Such a split could change the political balance in Finland, since the Communists usually control about 20 per cent of the vote and since 1966 have participated in the center-left coalition government.

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The Soviets, who were represented at the Congress by a high-level delegation, were chiefly concerned with preventing a split. Soviet party leaders Brezhnev and Suslov made this evident in talks with Finnish Party leaders in Moscow in late March. These talks probably led the Soviets to accept the inevitability of liberal gains. They are likely therefore to take a dim view of the conservative walk-out and will exert their influence to repair the split and bring the conservatives back.

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